

Title of Lesson: Extra! Extra! Read All About It?

(Suggested grade level: 6)

This lesson was created as a part of the Alabama History Education Initiative, funded by a generous grant from the Malone Family Foundation in 2009.

Author Information: Lesa H. Roberts, Ph.D (Cohort 1: 2009-2010)

School: Hampton Cove Middle School

School System: Huntsville City School

Huntsville, AL

Background Information:

President Woodrow Wilson was a staunch isolationist and believed that he could keep the U.S. out of the European conflict of the Great War. Nevertheless, American trade with the Allies soared. Great Britain and France borrowed billions of dollars from American banks. Germany, because of Great Britain's naval blockade, was not able to trade with the U.S. and saw America's trade with the Allies as anything but neutral. To stop American aid to Britain, Germany announced in February, 1915 that it would use its U-boats to sink any vessel that entered or left British ports. President Wilson warned that America would hold Germany responsible for any American lives lost in submarine attacks. Germany was determined to cut off supplies to Great Britain; they ignored the U.S. warnings.

Overview of lesson:

Students will read two newspaper articles from the *Birmingham News* detailing the outcry after the sinking of the *Lusitania*. One article, published two days after the attack, is written as a feature article rather than a news report. The students will research the facts about the sinking of the *Lusitania* and rewrite the article, using standard news article guidelines.

Feature articles can be informative, entertaining, and persuasive. A feature article may provide information about an important issue, offer an opinion about current affairs, or present a personal or humorous perspective on everyday life. Unlike news reports which can quickly go out of date, feature articles have a more general focus and do not go out of date after a few days.

Newspaper articles provide information on newsworthy topics; that is, any event or issue of importance to a majority of readers. News articles provide the reader with all the facts about this issue or event including who, what, where, when, why, and how. Statements, comments, and opinions from experts or people involved are also included.

(The [Scholastic](#) website provides additional information regarding the difference between news articles and feature articles.)

Content Standards

[Alabama Course of Study: Social Studies](#) (Bulletin 2004, No. 18)

Grade 6: Content Standard 5

Identify causes of World War I and reasons for entry into the war by the United States.

[National Standards for History](#), 1996

Era 7 Standard 2: The student understands the causes of World War I and why the United States intervened.

- Explain the causes of World War I in 1914 and the reasons for the declaration of United States neutrality.
- Assess how industrial research in aviation and chemical warfare influenced military strategy and the outcome of World War I.
- Analyze the impact of American public opinion on the Wilson administration's evolving foreign policy from 1914 to 1917.
- Evaluate Wilson's leadership during the period of neutrality and his reasons for intervention.

[National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies](#), (Bulletin 111, 2010)

Standard 2: Time, Continuity, and Change

Standard 5: Individuals, Groups, and Institutions

Standard 6: Power, Authority, and Governance

Standard 9: Global Connections

Primary Learning Objective(s):

The students will write a news article detailing the events of the sinking of the *Lusitania*.

Additional Learning Objective(s):

- The students will read primary documents and secondary sources while researching the sinking of the *Lusitania*.
- The students will utilize the 5 W's and H while writing the news article.

Time allotted:

Two class periods of 45 minutes each or one 90-minute block

Materials and Equipment:

- [“The German Warnings No Justification” the Birmingham News, May 9, 1915](#)
- [“Washington Seeks to Keep People of U.S. in Cool Mind” the Birmingham News, May 8, 1915](#)
- Secondary sources, such as history textbook and nonfiction texts
- Current or past news articles about national tragedies (9/11, Hurricane Katrina, Gulf Oil spill)
- Primary documents, such as newspaper articles and [propaganda posters](#)
 - The Library of Congress has the following photographs of Lusitania propaganda posters:
 - [Irishmen Avenge the Lusitania](#)
 - [When You Fire Remember This](#)
 - [Remember the Lusitania](#)
 - [Enlist](#) (Poster showing a woman, a passenger from the Lusitania, submerged in water cradling an infant in her arms.)
- News article rubric

Technological Resources:

- Internet access for student research on the *Lusitania* sinking
- Display camera, if available

Background/Preparation:

- The student should know the following:

- Background information about the causes of war in Europe, including the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, the alliance treaties, military build-up, and imperialism.
- Background information about the isolationist views of the U.S. in the years after the Spanish-American War.

Procedures/Activities:

Engagement/Motivation Activity:

Print and display the two articles from the *Birmingham News*, May 8 and 9, 1915. Discuss the aspects of this feature article. How is it different from most news articles written immediately after a tragic national event? (Few facts of the sinking are mentioned; emotional words and phrases are used a great deal.) Ask the students to help you locate the emotive words and phrases in the article and highlight or underline them under the display camera. (Ex: severely condemned, ingenious and crafty, massacred, calculated, sent to the bottom, wholesale assassination, etc.) Explain to the students the difference between a NEWS article and a FEATURE article.

Step 1	List the 5 W's and H on the board under the title News Article: Who, What, Where, When, Why, and How. Explain how news articles, often found on the front page, provide information based on facts. They may include quotes from witnesses or comments from others involved in the event.
Step 2	Display and read current and/or past news articles and ask students to help you highlight the 5 W's and H they see in the articles. You do not have to read the entire articles; most of this information can be found in the first few paragraphs.
Step 3	Explain to the students that they will write news articles about the sinking of the <i>Lusitania</i> . They can use some of the information from the two articles, but it should be easy for the reader to discern the difference between their news articles and the original articles.
Step 4	Give students time to research and use primary and secondary sources to locate facts about the <i>Lusitania</i> . Encourage them to use trade books and take notes about the 5 W's and H.
Step 5	As the students are writing the articles, remind them that major news articles need a catchy headline. They should also include their byline and a lead paragraph. If students wish to draw or include a photograph, it must have an appropriate caption.
Step 6	Students can work in pairs to edit and rewrite their articles.
Step 7	Allow students to share articles if time allows.
Step 8	Use rubric to assess news articles.

Assessment Strategies:

Use rubric to assess news articles.

Extension:

Give students a current news article and ask them to translate the article into a feature article. They should rewrite the article into a more narrative piece, including emotive words and quotes (these may be made up comments from possible witnesses or involved people).

Remediation:

Give students hard copies of articles written about a current event that have been written and as a news article and a feature article. Read the articles with the students and discuss the differences in writing style. Allow students to highlight the 5 W's and H in the news article.

Accommodation:

Give students an outline of a news article for which they have to simply fill in the blanks.

Modification:

Allow students to work with a partner to research and write the news article.

Newspaper Article: The Sinking of the *Lusitania*

Student Name _____

Directions: You will write a news article about the sinking of the *Lusitania*. You may use some of the information from the two articles presented in class, but it should be easy for the reader to discern the difference between your news article and the original articles. You will have time to research and use primary and secondary sources to locate facts about the *Lusitania*. You may use trade books and your notes from class. You will need to include a catchy headline, your byline, and a lead paragraph. If you want to include a drawing or a photograph, it must have an appropriate caption

Category	4 points	3 points	2 points	1 points
Layout - Headlines & Captions	Article has a headline that captures the reader's attention and accurately describes the content. Article has a byline and a lead paragraph. Any graphics have captions that adequately describe the people and action in the graphic.	Article has a headline that accurately describes the content. Article has a byline and a lead paragraph. Any graphics have captions.	Article has a headline that accurately describes the content. Article has a byline. Graphic has incomplete caption.	Article is missing byline OR article does not have adequate headline OR graphic does not have caption.
Spelling and Proofreading	No spelling or grammar errors remain after one or more people (in addition to the writer) read and corrected the article.	No more than one (1) spelling or grammar error remains after one or more people (in addition to the writer) read and correct ed the article.	No more than three (3) spelling or grammar errors remain after one or more people (in addition to the writer) read and corrected the article.	Several spelling or grammar errors remain in the final copy of the article.
Use of Primary Sources	Reading and use of primary source material was thorough.	Reading and use of primary source material was fairly thorough.	Reading and use of primary source material was incomplete.	Reading and use of primary source material was not done.
Who, What, When, Why, Where, and How	Article completely addresses the 5 W's and H (who, what, when, why, where, and how).	90-99% of the article adequately addresses the 5 W's and H (who, what, when, why, where, and how).	75-89% of the article adequately addresses the 5 W's and H (who, what, when, why, where, and how).	Less than 75% of the article adequately addresses the 5 W's and H (who, what, when, why, where, and how).
Articles - Supporting Details	The details in the article are clear, effective, and vivid 90-100% of the time.	The details in the article are clear and pertinent 80-90% of the time.	The details in the article are clear and pertinent 75-89% of the time.	The details in the article are neither clear nor pertinent.

Total _____

Comments: